

NOAA Coastal Services Center

COASTAL MANAGEMENT FELLOWSHIP

Call for Project Proposals

September 2001

Overview

Purpose of the Fellowship Program

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Management Fellowship was established to provide on-the-job education and training opportunities for postgraduate students in coastal resource management and policy and to provide specific technical assistance for state coastal resource management programs. The program matches highly qualified, recently graduated master's, doctoral, and professional degree students with hosts around the U.S. in state coastal zone management (CZM) programs. The recipients will work for two years on substantive state-level coastal resource management issues that pertain to federal management policies and regulations. The recipients are designated NOAA Coastal Management Fellows.

How the Fellowship Program Works

Six competitive postgraduate fellowships will be awarded to recent meritorious master's, doctoral, and professional degree recipients, who will spend two years working with coastal resource management agencies on state-level needs and federal management issues. One state, Connecticut, was competitively selected in 2001, but deferred placement of a fellow until 2002. Therefore, five additional states will be selected for 2002.

State coastal zone programs will submit project proposals to compete for placement of one of the Coastal Management Fellows. The project selection process will be completed before the fellow selection process so that prospective fellows will know the nature of the fellowships for which they are competing. Since the projects are selected independently of the fellows and because the Center wishes to broaden the educational experience, selected fellows are likely to serve outside their home states.

Calendar of the Project Application Process (Fiscal Year 2002)

Project Announcement	September 1, 2001
Project Proposals Due	October 19, 2001*
Final Project Selection	November 13, 2001
Project/Fellow Matching Workshop	April 15–19, 2002 (in Charleston, SC)
Fellow Trip to Matched State Program	TBD between Fellow and State
Project/Fellow Start Date	August 1, 2002

* All proposals must be received at the NOAA Coastal Services Center by 5 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) on this date. Proposals received after this date will not be considered. Proposals transmitted via e-mail or fax will not be accepted. Proposals must not exceed eight pages in length, and must be in 12-point font size.



NOAA Coastal Services Center
LINKING PEOPLE, INFORMATION, AND TECHNOLOGY

Project Selection Process

Program Eligibility

All state coastal programs approved or under consideration may submit one application for this program to the NOAA Coastal Services Center. States that are hosting a first-year fellow are not eligible to apply for a second fellow in 2002. These states include Delaware, Maine, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. Because Connecticut has deferred placement until 2002, they do not need to recompetete.

State Match

All states selected to host a fellow will be required to provide a total of \$15,000 in nonfederal funds to cover a portion of the fellow's per diem (\$7,500 each year of the fellowship). This money cannot be in-kind support and cannot come from federal dollars.

Project Application Requirements

The Center, in cooperation with the Coastal States Organization, the National Sea Grant College Program Office, the University of Southern Mississippi, and the NOAA Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM), is seeking six to eight page project proposals from state coastal zone management programs for fellowship projects on critical state issues as defined by the state agency. Proposal reviewers look for projects that are both innovative and timely in addressing the state's needs (see project evaluation criteria below). For examples of project ideas, refer to the section on previous projects.

Proposal Sections

- **Background/Introduction** – clearly define the problem and the need for the project. Provide a summary of existing state/local efforts and how the project will integrate these efforts.
- **Goals and Objectives** – provide broad project goals and quantifiable objectives.
- **Milestones and Outcomes** – highlight specific target milestones, timelines, and desired outcomes in terms of products or services. The fellow's project (or portion of the project) should realistically be able to be completed within the two years of the fellowship.
- **Project Description** – detail (three pages maximum) the specifics of the project.
- **Fellow Mentoring** – discuss how the host agency will mentor the fellow's integration with the staff, day-to-day supervision, and on-the-job education. The fellowship is an educational and professional development opportunity for the fellow and the proposal should define how the state agency will accomplish this goal. The mentor should be identified by name in the proposal.
- **Project Partners** – describe project partners and their respective roles.

- **Cost Share Description** – discuss how the state agency will provide in-kind support (office equipment, supplies, specialized software and hardware needed for the project, and personnel assistance as needed for training) and the \$15,000 nonfederal fellowship match. The resources committed to the project, including any required software or training, should be described in this section.

Project Evaluation Criteria (with maximum possible points)

The \$15,000 cost-sharing must be defined; if the source (must be a nonfederal source) of this funding is not defined, the proposal will not be considered.

Project Need - 25 points

- How severe is the problem the project is addressing?
- How does the proposed project advance one of the state CZM program's goals and objectives?

Project Approach - 25 points

- Is the proposed approach technically feasible?
- Is the proposed approach well defined and achievable within two years?
- To what degree is the state committing resources to the successful completion of the project?

Benefits - 25 points

- What are the anticipated benefits of the project to the state program?

Educational Experience - 20 points

- To what degree will the mentor provide an educational experience for the fellow?

Innovation - 5 points

- How innovative is the project?

Project Selection

In addition to the project evaluation criteria outlined above, certain program policy factors also may be considered when making the final project selection. An attempt will be made to disperse the selected projects geographically.

A project selection panel will be convened to review and recommend selection of the top six proposed projects using the criteria outlined above. The panel will consist of the NOAA Coastal Management Fellowship program manager and representatives of the Coastal States Organization, the National Sea Grant College Program Office, the University of Southern Mississippi, and NOAA OCRM. Technical experts will be brought in as required to evaluate the technical content of the proposals. This selection panel will present its recommendations to the NOAA Coastal Management Services branch chief, who will make the final decision.

Placement Process

The selected states will serve as hosts to the Coastal Management Fellows. Each of the selected host agencies should send the fellow mentor to the final placement workshop held in Charleston, South Carolina, in April 2002. The fellow finalists will be brought to the workshop for final

interviews and placement. The placement workshop should be considered a mutual interviewing/selection process with the fellow finalists having as much to do with final placement as the state mentors. The workshop will consist of (1) orientation to the program; (2) host agency project proposal presentations; (3) finalist presentations; (4) finalist-host interviews; and (5) fellow matching.

If a state does not find a suitable candidate during this workshop, it will be given the option to defer fellow placement until 2003. States will only be allowed one deferment before they will have to recompile.

Fellowship Program

Fellowship Philosophy

The NOAA Coastal Management Fellows should be given every opportunity for professional and educational training and growth. They should be integral players in either existing or new coastal management projects involving critical state issues. The portion of each project involving a fellow should be able to be completed within the two years of the fellowship. The fellows should be fully integrated into the CZM staff to learn from the experiences of their co-workers, and fellows also should be allowed to attend professional meetings and workshops and prepare reports and papers, as appropriate, to further their educational growth.

Mentoring

Mentors are key individuals in the fellowship program. Fellows must have a mentor within the state agency to guide them on project-specific issues as well as on professional and long-term goals. In addition, the mentor must help integrate the fellow into the daily life of the state coastal agency. It is the mentor's responsibility to ensure that the fellow has the resources, training, and support needed to complete the project successfully.

Because mentoring is so important to the success of the fellowship experience, all mentors and fellows are encouraged to complete a joint mentoring statement within the first several months of the fellowship. This statement should be an agreement between the fellow and mentor regarding the mentor's role in the project, the fellow's career development, and the fellow's integration into the state agency.

Stipend and Expenses

Each fellow will receive \$30,000 in stipend and per diem per year. Expenses in excess of this amount include (1) benefits, including health insurance and worker's compensation; (2) relocation reimbursement; and (3) travel associated with the fellowship experience (see also section on travel requests). The University of Southern Mississippi (hereafter referred to as "cooperator") will administer the fellow's pay and benefits through a cooperative agreement with the NOAA Coastal Services Center.

Reporting/Evaluation Requirements

In addition to developing the mutual mentoring statement as discussed previously (see “Mentoring” above), the fellow and mentor will meet within the first several months of the fellowship to develop the fellow's professional-development and project-related goals. At the end of one year and at the end of the fellowship, the mentor and fellow will meet to discuss how well these goals have been met. Open communication between the fellow and mentor is the key to a successful experience, and developing these goals and then discussing how well they are being achieved is one way to facilitate effective communication.

Also, the mentor and fellow each will be asked to complete a brief written evaluation of the program in August of each year.

Coastal Management Fellows will be administratively responsible to the cooperator. The hosting state coastal program will provide day-to-day and technical direction. The role of the Coastal Management Fellowship program manager is one of ombudsman between the fellow and the state host agency.

Travel Requests/Training

Travel funds have been allocated to facilitate each fellow's educational growth and professional development. All travel arrangements must be made through the cooperator. This support may include conferences, workshops, short courses, or similar opportunities. Each year, the fellows will be required to attend the meeting of either the Coastal Society (on even years) or the Coastal Zone (on odd years) to meet as a group.

Any travel associated with the fellow's project, including fieldwork, attendance at regional or local meetings, etc., must be covered by the state agency.

In January or February of each year, the Center will pay for the fellows to attend a 2-day meeting either at the Center (on odd years) or at the University of Southern Mississippi (on even years). The purpose of this meeting is to facilitate communication among the fellows and among the fellows, Center staff, and the university. This provides the fellows with an opportunity to obtain technical information from Center staff and the university on project-related questions.

Host-Fellow Relationship

The NOAA Coastal Management Fellowship is a professional development and educational opportunity. Through it, state hosts provide fellows with professional, on-the-job training in state and local coastal resource management decision making. The fellow and the host must be sensitive to their mutual responsibilities in achieving a balance between office requirements and professional development. The fellow should honor the working protocols of the host office and contribute to useful and relevant products. At the same time, the host is expected to provide opportunities for involvement in substantive issues that honor legitimate professional, educational, and developmental activities of the fellow. State mentors should be fully vested in the program and available to the fellows for support and advice.

Participation in the fellowship program is a privilege. To maintain this privilege, fellows must continue to demonstrate diligence and adaptability to the host environment. The Coastal Management Fellowship program manager, after due consultation with and consideration of the mutual rights and interests of the fellow, the host, and the cooperator, will adjudicate problems that may arise.

Previous Fellowship Projects

Some successful projects from previous years are briefly described below. These projects are provided only as examples; proposals are not limited to these areas.

Planning Projects

- Developed and provided the information base for reducing the hazards associated with coastal development. The project developed an erosion hazard monitoring program and a coastal hazards database. The project also facilitated local education outreach and integration of existing information management systems.
- Developed information and evaluation tools for objective examination of beach nourishment throughout the state. Criteria were established to evaluate and prioritize the suitability of a site for beach nourishment and a methodology was developed to apply the criteria.

Policy Projects

- Developed a standardized procedure to use in making sound, consistent, and defensible decisions regarding the state's coastal wetland resources. This project analyzed and integrated the assessment of biological resources and the addressing of human development issues (i.e. socioeconomic concerns).
- Developed a decision-making policy that provided a clear outline and guidance for the identification of problems related to dredging operations. In addition, the fellow developed an information management system to facilitate an expedited, comprehensive review of projects.
- Developed policy response options for sea level rise. The project goals were to determine the state's current ability to respond to sea level rise, to increase public awareness of coastal hazards issues related to sea level rise, and to enhance the state's ability to plan for sea level rise.

Outreach Projects

- Developed criteria for approval of local government hazard mitigation and redevelopment policies for the local comprehensive planning process by working with counties and municipalities, participating in local working group meetings, and conducting training workshops.

Habitat Projects

- Improved marine habitat protection in the state through the design and implementation of an assessment methodology. Another component of the project was to develop a procedure to collect information about marine habitats to be integrated into the state geographic

information system (GIS) to identify risks to sensitive habitats and to develop guidelines to protect critical marine habitats.

- Developed regional standards and protocols for coastal habitat restoration and management. The project included updating the habitat documentation for one or more regions of Long Island and developing regionally modified criteria for identifying, documenting, evaluating, and designating significant coastal fish and wildlife habitat areas on Long Island.

Technology Projects

- Developed and implemented a GIS to identify and track coastal use permit applications and coastal habitat mitigation activities. The project included developing procedures to alert permit analysts to possible impacts to existing mitigation areas and evaluating areas of prior habitat mitigation to rate the degree of success.
- Created a computerized database and map of potential sites for estuarine wetland creation, restoration, enhancement, and mitigation. The project also helped to establish the Dynamic Estuary Management Information System (DEMIS) framework in the targeted estuaries and their watersheds and to create GIS layers for the DEMIS in each estuary.

Application and Information

Coastal zone program project proposals must be received at the NOAA Coastal Services Center by 5 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) on October 19, 2001. Applicants must submit one signed original and four copies of the proposal. **E-mailed or faxed proposals will not be accepted.** Completed proposals should be sent to:

Coastal Management Fellowship Program
Attn: Jan Kucklick
NOAA Coastal Services Center
2234 South Hobson Ave.
Charleston, SC 29405-2413

For further information, contact Jan Kucklick, Coastal Management Fellowship program manager, at (843) 740-1279 or by e-mail at Jan.Kucklick@noaa.gov.